

Rev

A
SERMON
Preached at
Lincoln Assizes.

March, the 6th. 1691.

Imprimatur,

Guil. Lancaster R. P. D.

Hen. Episc. Lond. à Sacris Domest.

March 24.
1691.

A
S E R M O N
Preached at the
A S S I Z E S
HELD AT
L I N C O L N,

March the 6th. 169¹₂.

Before the Right HONOURABLE
Sir JOHN HOLT, K^t,
Lord Chief Justice of *England*.

By W A L. LEIGHTON HOUSE, Rector of
Wasingburgh nigh *Lincoln*, and late Fellow of
Lincoln College, Oxon.

Printed at the earnest request of the
Gentlemen of the Country.

Ἄντε δίκαιός ἐστιν ὅντις ὁ μὴ αδίκος
Ἄλλος δίκαιος δυνάμενος, μὴ βούλεται. Phil. in Palamede.

London, Printed for *W. Crook*, at the *Green-Dragon* without *Temple-Bar*, 1692.

To the Right Honourable
Sir *JOHN HOLT*, Kt,
Lord Chief Justice of the
King's Bench, and one of His
Majesties most Honourable
Privy-Council.

A N D

To the Right Worshipful
EDWARD PAYNE, of
How, in the County of *Lincoln*,
Esq; , High Sheriff of the
County of *Lincoln*.

Right Honourable, and Right Worshipful,

THO I was importunately solicited to make the following Discourse publick, not only by the Gentry of the Country, but likewise by most of the Learned in the Law, who were part of that numerous Auditory before whom it was deliver'd ; yet the Sense of my own incapacity at the best, together with those few days which my pressing Occasions would allow me, to fit my self for such an under-

The Epistle Dedicatory.

taking, made me demur for some time ere I durst correspond with their Requests. And indeed nothing but the consideration of Two such great Patrons your selves, (who may each of you lay just Claim to it), could have prevail'd with me to have reprei'vd it to a longer Life. You both are so great encouragers of the Subject it chiefly Treats of, (Justice and Mercy) that as they seem riveted in your very Constitution ; so you may claim a natural Right to this Discourse. So that as most Persons are necessitated to screw up their Inventions to fit Epistles Dedicatory, by Flattery and Applause, to make the Subject of which they Treat, and the Person to whom they Dedicate, to quadrate with each other. There is such an agreeableness between your Genius and the Matter compris'd in the subsequent Discourse, that should I say it decyphers each of you, there is no part of the World that is thoroughly read in either of your Tempers, which would think the Encomium undeservedly plac'd. You my Lord, from your first setting out into the World, have had the Character of Wise, Just, Good, and Benign, and as every day adds to your Knowledge, so does it to the lustre of your Glory too. For by the continual

The Epistle Dedicatory.

*nual and impartial Exercise of Justice, still bestud-
ed with Mercy, you beautifie your Place, high
as it is, abundantly more than it can adorn you;
and thereby embellish that Fountain from whence
you derive your Commission. And were you really to
hear the sentiments and expressions of all good Men
in your late Circuit, concerning your Lordships Wi-
dedom, Industry, and Compassion, joyn'd with
an unbiass'd Care for Equity, 'twould outstrip Hy-
perbole itself, and constrain you to blush at their
so frequent admiration of your Virtues.*

*And as for you Sir, you have always mov'd un-
der that excellent Character of having oblig'd all that
know you, by your extraordinary Candour, Cle-
mency, and Justice. And altho the Sphere, you
move in, be not so conspicuous as that of his Lord-
ships, yet that Specimen which you have always gi-
ven of a strict regard to Justice and Commiserati-
on, is a sufficient evidence, that in what Post so-
ever you were plac'd, you would act according to the
Rules of Prudence and Sincerity. But besides all
this Sir, I have a greater Tie to lay this at your
Feet, as an expression of that indelible Gratitude
which I must ever owe to you: And tho Flattery be*

The Epistle Dedicatory.

So sordid a thing, and so much against my Temper, that you know Sir, I would sooner die than be guilty of it; yet the fault would be as great on the other hand, should I wrap up such favours as I have receiv'd from you, in a dark obscurity. For I must not be ashamed to own, that (besides all other kindnesses, which are vastly great) I owe that which is dearer than Life, even my Liberty itself, to your exceeding great Favour; you alone having been the Instrument of freeing me in a great measure, from those sorrows which a Romish Adversary forc'd me to grapple with. And therefore be pleas'd to accept of this, as a Monument of my publick acknowledgement, which is all the favour I shall at present ask from you; only that you will both of you vouchsafe to excuse the freedom of this Dedication, and Patronize it (not for the merits of its Author, but) in hope that it may, in some measure, promote that important Work, which is the Subject of the following Papers; which will add infinite Satisfaction to,

Your Honours and Worships,

April 2.
1692.

most unsigneedly Devoted,

and most humble Servant,

Walter Leightonhouse.

A

SERMON

Preached at

Lincoln Assizes.

2 Chron. 19. 6, 7.

Take heed what you do, for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord who is with you in the judgment.

Wherefore let the fear of the Lord be upon you, take heed and do it; for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts.

Although mankind be by the instinct of Nature a sociable Being, and delights in Conversation and Society; yet such is the pravity of his Inclinations, that were there not a Coercive Power from without, as well as a Sense of God and Religion from within; the whole World would in

a little time be turn'd into one single Aceldama.

The sturdy Lyon or the bloody Tyger, the Leopard or the Panther, will rarely, if at all, prey upon their own Species: Yet Man tho endued with Reason, sticks not to be guilty of a more brutish Cruelty. The First-born of the World, did inhumanly Butcher his own Brother: and *Israel* (Gods chosen one) supplanted and over-reacht the First-born of *Isaac*.

And men are so mighty prone to these things, that were it not for humane Sanctions, the Dens and Caves of the Earth would be our safest retreat, to secure our selves from wrong and injury. Natural Religion indeed lays strong Ties upon a man's Conscience to answer the Ends of his Being, and revealed Religion doth much more so; but yet the Axes of a Temporal Authority, are so much more cogent than natural Truths, or supernatural Revelation, that *Aaron's Rod* would do little good unless fortified by the *Power and Scepter of Moses*. If there were no Law to restrain man within the Fences and Mounds of Justice, his Strength would be the only Rule of his Will, and the Standard of his Actions. That would be mine which I could get by force; and yet I should have Right to it no longer than whilst a more powerful Arm grapt it from me. The Sons of Violence would engross what their Swords could reach, and the best Patriot might starve, whilst the unjust Banditti were surrounded with Plenty. Trade and Commerce would be empty Names; and Rapine

Rapine and Injustice would be as common as Stones in the Streets. Liberty and Property would be banish'd the Earth, and our Lives as well as our Estates would be in continual Jeopardy. A Tumultuous Rabble would insult over the greatest Potentates ; and an illbred Mob tread upon the learned and grave. *Tribulation and Anguish* would be the Portion of the vertuous and religious, and perpetual Dread and Fear would crowd into the Hearts of all the Sons of *Adam*.

These and innumerable worse Calamities would, like an unbridled Deluge, overflow universal Mankind, were there no restraints but what are impos'd by Nature or by Grace ; and were the Purple and the Scarlet taken from us, the State and the Altar would soon be so too.

So that 'tis to such as you, *my Lord*, that we owe both the safety of our Persons, the security of our Estates, and the enjoyment of our Religion ; and all military Conquests abroad would do us little service, unleis you kept our Peace at home. 'Tis by your Administration alone that Piety is advanced ; Truth preserved, Tranquility settled, Privilege bound-ed, Innocency protected, Learning encouraged, our Persons secured from Violence, and our Estates from Plunder. In short, *'Tis Judgment alone that establish-eth a Land.* Prov. 19. 4. And the exercise of that is by the Great King of Heaven and Earth repos'd in your Hands : And therefore you have need to *Take heed what you do* : for ye judge not for man, but for the

Lord, who is with you in the judgment. Wherefore let the fear of the Lord be upon you, take heed and do it; for there is no iniquity in the Lord our God, nor respect of Persons, nor taking of gifts.

Which words were spoken by good *Jehosaphat* King of *Judah*, and may properly be call'd his Charge to the Judges, when he Commissioned them to go their several Circuits; and import as tho he had expressed himself more largely thus,

I am now about to entrust you with a concern of no less Moment, than the Welfare of my Subjects, the Honor of my Person, and the Establishment of my Kingdom; and therefore 'tis necessary that I advise you in a Matter of so great Weight, to be careful and circumspect how you behave yourselves, in the Management of so great a Charge; greater perhaps than you, at first sight, conceive it to be. For altho 'tis true you have your Commission from me, yet the Judgment which is committed to your Charge, belongs to a much greater

than I am; for it is not mine but the * Lords, who is constantly present in your Courts of Judicature, and stands by and sees all your Proceedings,

* *Deut. 1. v. 17.* *חִיְּה רַב מִשְׁפָּט*
 □ *פָּנָן.* i. e. *Judicium est*
Dei & Deo utroque enim modo
reddi iustitiae, commendatum vobis est a Deo & Deo nomine illud administrari.

hears all your Awards and Arbitraments, and understands the whole Process of the Hall. Wherefore let his dreadful Presence strike you into an awful regard of him, and let it oblige you to act as impartially, as tho he was really visible to your bodily Eyes.

I doubt not, but were I your King personally upon the Bench with you, no Judgment which was evidently false, would either for Favor or Affection, Lucre or Interest, proceed out of your Lips. Yet alas ! what am I when compared to the great King of Heaven and Earth ? I can'tis true at my pleasure send you a *Quietus*, but what is that to the Terrors of the Omnipotent *Jehovah*, who when provoked is a *consuming Fire* ? and who will most certainly summons you before the Tribunal of Heaven, call you to a strict Account, and if you have accepted of the person of the wicked, and overthrown the righteous in Judgment. *Prov. 18. 5.* notwithstanding your Vestments of Honor, if your Sins be of the same Dye, you shall in the Day of Vengeance be covered with a Robe of shame, and be clad in confusion as with a Cloak. For there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, but justice and judgment are the habitation of his Throne. *Psal. 89. 14.* from whence he cannot be moved at any time, thorough respect of Persons or taking of Gifts, but be the Circumstances of the Man never so poor, or never so lofty, God judgeth not according to outward appearance, but judgeth righteous Judgment, and from the Equitableness of those proceedings, no Interest or Passion, no gilded Title or honorable Employ, no Trust or Ability can divert him ; therefore let my Advice seem seasonable to you this Day, and take heed what you do, for you judge not for Man, but for the Lord, who is with you in the Judgment &c.

This is briefly the Paraphrase of the Text, which suggests unto us these following Particulars.

I. That Judges do personate God himself, who is
II. A constant Eye witness of all their Proceedings, and therefore,

III. They ought to be very circumspect, and to have a reverential Awe and Fear upon them, for that,

IV. If they *pervert Judgment* God will vindicate his own Honor, and punish them severely for it. *For there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons nor taking of gifts.*

All these seem plainly imply'd in the Text. Upon each of which, I purposed to have enlarged at this time, but in the treating of them, I found my Meditations croud in so thick upon me, that (for fear of being too tedious) I was obliged to confine myself to speak only to the Two former of them.

I. That Judges do personate God himself, who is
II. A constant Eye witness of all their Proceedings.

Of which in their Order,

And first, Judges do personate God himself.

And for this Reason it is, that the Greek Fathers do frequently denominate Magistrates Σύρεστοι, Co-
assessors with God in the Throne of Judgment. Not that he delivers up an absolute Sovereignty to them ; but they as his Stewards, Deputies or Lieutenants, are substituted to represent him, in administering Justice and Equity, maintaining Order and supporting Peace, among the Children Men, *helping them to right who suffer wrong, justifying the righteous and condemning*

denning the wicked. Deut. 25. 1. And for this purpose the Almighty hath been pleased to impress his own Character upon them, and to stile them by his own peculiar Title. *Thou shalt not revile the Gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people,* Exod. 22. 28. And who those Gods there mentioned were, you may see, if you please to have recourse to the 8 Verse of that Chapter. *If the thief be not found, then the master of the house shall be brought unto the Judges,* those were the Gods before mentioned; thus again Psal. 86. 6. *I have said ye are Gods,* אלהים Gods, i. e. in respect to the Fountain of their Power, which was from the Most High, who for that reason honored them with his own Name. And 'tis a most remarkable place to our purpose, which we have from the Mouth of God himself, Exod. 4. 16. where speaking to Moses he saith *Thou shalt be to him אלהים God,* which the Seventy render thus, οὐ δέκατος ἐστι τοι ὁ θεός τοῦ δέκτη. i. e. Thou shalt be in the stead of God; thou shalt represent my Person, in commanding and judging and revealing my Will to him; which is the very same with that of Exod. 7. 1. οὐδὲ ἐστι οὐ δέκτη Φαραὼ, I have appointed thee God over Pharaoh; I have given the Power of Life and Death into thine Hands, I have placed thee in his Throne, in his Authority who judgeth right; I have substituted thee chief Agent in this weighty Matter. But that which will clear the point most effectually, is what is recorded in Psal. 82. 1.

Tu autem eris ei in hinc ad Deum pertinere. Nonnulli recentiores perspicere admodum reddiderunt, & ipse tibi pro Deo.

God

God standeth in the congregation of the mighty, he is a Judge among Gods; the Word in the Original is γα, which is the Name of the Omnipotent God; and then these Words must be read thus, *God standeth in the Congregation of God*, i. e. in his own Judicature, or in that Judicature which is erected and authorized by him, i. e. it is by Gods Commission that Judges act, and they do really personate God himself. Thus the *Jewish Arab* (as Dr. *Hammond* observes) gloses upon it, observing that there is a repetition of the Name again instead of the Affix.

But I shall not stay any longer upon the proof of this Proposition, but shall rather chuse to proceed to draw such Observations, as are deducible from this first Head, and therein I shall observe.

I. That if Judges do personate God, then they ought to act, as they are convinced God would do if he sat in their place, as they do in his.

And here perhaps some Persons would not think it any digression, should I draw a Scheme of the Magistrates Duty, and shew wherein they ought to be *Righteous as God is Righteous, and Merciful as that great Judge of all the Earth is so*. But this, my Lord, would be Τό φως ἡλίου θεμιτεύτερον & Λύχον τὸ μεσημβετίου αὐτού. *To light a Candle in order to add Lustre to the Sun in its noon day Glory.* And should I herein go about to instruct you in your Duty, I should think that I transgressed my own. But yet I hope it may not be unbecoming this place or this Assembly, if I a little descant upon those two Cardinal Attributes of God, which he exerciseth as a Judge, viz. *His Justice*.

Justice and his Mercy, and leave it to your particular Breast, to consider how far you are concerned to Copy after so fair an Original.

First then, I desire you to consider of the impartial Justice of that great God whom you personate. Surely he will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgment, &c. Job 34. 12. For who ever perisht being innocent, or where were the righteous cut off? Job 4. 7.

There are two things which are more particularly pressing upon a Person to deviate from the Rules of Justice, viz.

First, Favor or Affection, and Secondly, Interest. Now that God is no way wrapt or byass'd with either of these, even the Words in the latter part of my Text assure us. For with the Lord our God, there is no respect of persons nor taking of gifts. The greatest Pomp and the most splendid retinue, is no motive to his Favor; nor can the largest Fortune bribe him to be unjust. It is Innocency alone that can bespeak his Love, and Simplicity of Heart that can engage his Affection; All his ways are Righteousness and Truth, and the Man that is not upright, be he what he will, must tremble at his Bar. There the poor helpless Orphan shall have his complaint heard, though he cannot plead for himself; and the Tears of the Widow and the Afflicted shall be a convincing Dialect. There is no respect of Face or Fortune with him; but the Rich and the Poor, the Course and the

regarding him in the
way, Col. 3. 25.

Well-favoured, shall be weighed in the Balance of
 Justice, and sentence shall be
 passed without || Partiality and
 without Hypocrisie.

¶ 2^o observation, 1. Tim 5. 21.
 Metaphor a juxta a libra cuius
 lata altera preponderat ita ut
 nullum est equilibrium.

It is recorded of *Cesar*, that
 in hearing of a Cause betwixt *Cassius* and *Brutus*, he
 confessed, *Melior causa Cassii, sed denegare Bruto nihil
 posse*; That *Cassius* had Justice on his side, but yet
Brutus was his Favorite, and therefore he must give
 Sentence for him. But far be it from *God* that he should
 do wickedness, and from the Almighty that he should com-
 mit iniquity. Job 34. 10. *He will be just in all his
 Ways, and righteous in all his Works, his Ways are equal
 tho done in the dark, and his Justice irreproveable
 tho acted in secret; in a Word, Impartial Justice is
 the Habitation of his Throne, and without any respect of
 Persons; he gives to every Man according to his Works.*

And Secondly, As he cannot be swayed by Favor,
 so he cannot be byassed by Interest.

It is an Observation as old as *Tully*,
 * 2^o Ac. in Ferrem. * *Ingentes divitiae iudiciorum religionem
 veritatemque solent perfringere*; which I shall chuse to
 explain by the Mouth of *God* himself, Deut. 16. 19.
*A gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the
 words of the righteous. But now God will not be
 caught with such trifling Baits as these; For their sil-
 ver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the
 wrath of the Lord. Ezech. 7. 19.* It is true indeed,
 Interest is the great Wheel of Motion in this lower
 Orb, the Ploughman and Mechanick, the Soldier and
 the

the Merchant, the Lawyer and the Statesman, the Politician and the Magistrate, nay I may add the Scholar and the Preacher, do all exert their Faculties, and spend their Labor and their Oyl, in hopes of Interest and Advantage. The Fatigue and Heat of the Day, would be really grievous and uneasy, were there no recompence of Reward even in this World. But yet that Person *who justifies the Wicked for Reward, and by that means takes away the righteousness of the Righteous from him*, deviates from the Rules of his great Master, whom he personates, who hath without any reserve declared, that *The wickedness of the Wicked shall be upon him, and the righteousness of the Righteous shall be upon him. Will the Lord be pleas'd with Thousands of Rams, or Ten Thousands of Rivers of Oyl; will Agag's fatter Cattle be to him a Peace Offering, or will the richest Oblations of the Sinner, be grateful in his Eye?* No, *To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to him than sacrifice. Prov. 21. 3. and in these he hath more pleasure than in Burnt Offerings for sin. Heb. 10. 6.* God never passeth by the Failures of a Man because rich, nor doth he ever disregard a just Plea, because the Person is poor, or a Widow: he suffers not the Plaintiffs Cause to want weight, only because the Clients Pocket doth so, nor will he wink at a false Verdict, in the behalf of the Defendant, for all the Riches of Licinius or Achaemenes. *For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness, and his eyes behold the thing that is upright, yea his eyes are always open to the righteous, and his Hands always ready to deal to every man according to the fruit of his doings. Jer. 17. 10.* But then.

Secondly, as God is just so he is merciful likewise, yea *his mercy is over all his works*. And although in this, Earthly Magistrates have not power to act according to the measures of the Almighty, because he hath an absolute Dominion over the Creature, and may do what he will with his own; whereas Earthly Judges are oblig'd to pass Sentence *Secundum allegata & probata*; yet Mercy being the Triumphant Attribute of Heaven, 'tis fit that they, who personate God in his Justice, should in some measure tread in the steps of his Compassion too, tho they cannot make so deep an impression. And in order to this, I shall only desire them to consider, That God doth not at all times inflict an equal Punishment upon two Persons, tho guilty of the Breach of the same Law; but hath Recourse to a *Geometrical Proportion*, and either increases or abates his Inflections as it suits to his Justice, intermixed with his Mercy, and directed by his Wisdom; as for instance. This Man was hurried on by a violent strength of Temptation; That wilfully run himself into the same Sin; This Sin has grown to a Habit in that Person; but 'tis the first time, and that by surprise, that ever this man sinned in that nature. That Man broke through all the strong Enclosure of God's assisting Grace; This Person was laid open to the Temptation. This was but *a babe in Christ*; That has been fed with the strong meat of the Gospel. This Persons Bashfulness led him to sin in the dark; That had a *whores Forhead*, and committed his Iniquity at Noon-day.

Here

Here, tho the Sin be the same in several Persons, yet these Circumstances will engage God to exert his Mercy more largely towards one than towards the other: Thus does he *make way to his anger*, or as we read it in the vulgar Latin, *Librat viam ad iram suam*; He weighs the way to his Indignation, considers each Punctilio of the fault, and catches at every Circumstance which will open a Door to the poor Offender: For altho he does not *respect Persons*, yet he *will not destroy the Righteous with the Wicked*: The Righteous, who altho Sinners, yet are comparatively Righteous, *with the wicked*, who are habitually or wilfully such. And as God observes a measure in criminal, so does he likewise in judicial Proceedings. He will not encourage those who contend for Smoke, for a Trifle, (tho their Cause be just) so much as he will those whose all lies at stake. *i. e.* God would not, did he sit in our Courts of Judicature, give Light for so large damage to a *Boutifeu*, or a common Barretter, as he would to an oppressed Widow, or a defrauded Orphan; for he always has a *faavour to the peaceable*; but the Turbulent and Contentious his *Soul is not with them*. He especially shews Mercy to those who are not able to do themselves Justice, and will relieve the oppressed innocent out of his hands *who is too strong for him*.

These are briefly the Rules, This the Method, which God Almighty follows in the Exercise of his Justice and his Mercy. To which I might add several weighty Reasons to move you to go and do likewise; but your known Integrity and great Wisdom will be

a sufficient bar for my not doing so; especially since I may, and that most justly too, accost you in the same words that the *Widow of Tekoah did King David*, *That as an Angel of God, so are you, my Lord, to discern between good and bad.* 2 Sam. 14. 17. And therefore 'twould be the greatest breach of Charity in the World to think you would act against Knowldg, since you have never yet given one instance either of your Injustice or Incompassion. However be pleas'd to give me leave to speak to you in the words of one of the first Fathers and Martyrs of the Primitive Church; 'O θεοίς ἄδοντις τούς λεπτούς την ἀυτήν, Εἰ τούς ταξιν, οὐ τούς κλήσιν, ὡς οὖν αὐτούς καὶ εἰνδηπότε. καὶ εἰνδηπότε τον λαγόν, *Justin Mart*; God hath given you his own Honour, his own Place, his own Name; therefore do you judg the People, as he himself would judg them. Which is our first Observation deducible from our first Particular, That if Judges personate God, then they ought to act as they are convinc'd he would do, were he in their stead, as they are in his.

Secondly, If they personate God, then we ought to honour and pay a Civil Regard to them. And here I shall not Treat of that Respect which is due to them when off the Bench; for that every one will yield that understands the Measures of Civility; and those that do not, their Scarlet and their Trophies, their Coaches and Attendance, will attract them to do so. But I shall insist on that part of Regard which is due to them as *Vice Gods*, in order to the promoting Justice and the advancement of Truth and Judgment. And herein every man

man ought to consider, whether, if God were in Person upon the Bench, he would dare to give *that Almighty Being* the trouble of deciding that Cause, in which he knew in Point of Justice, a Verdict ought to brought against him. Would a Defendant put in a Plea, which would appear evidently unjust in the Eye of that *Judg who seeth all things*? Or would a Witness attest that which his Conscience told him was an untruth, were he to Swear in the visible Presence of that God, who hath enjoyn'd him *not to bare false Witness against his Neighbour*? Would an Advocate *call good Evil, or evil Good*, would he by a fly Suggestion endeavour to enervate the Sinews of the Law, did he really see God in the Court; or would he say to his Client thy Cause is Right, when he knew nothing could make it so but Favour or a Fee, a sophistical Pleader, or a corrupt Judg? Would he dare to pick the Clients Pocket by subtle delays and falsehood, or supplant and undermine the Truth, to obtain either Interest or Reputation to himself? These things would not be done if God were in Court in some visible Schechinah; and therefore, Whoever is guilty of any of these fallacious Quirks, is as really peccant as if God stood as Judg before him. For since *we cvnnot see him Face to Face and live*, 'tis a Mercy that he is pleas'd to consult our Interest and Security so far, as to Commissionate one to Act in his stead; and therefore if we be guilty of any of these collusive Tricks, and disingenious Behaviour; we may suppose that he will reason with us in those Words of our Saviour in another Case, *In as much as you did it unto one of these, you did it unto me*, Matth. 25. 40. In that you

have gone about to stop the Current of Justice, and to turn judgment into wormwood, Amos 5. 7. by glossing over a bad Cause with the Paint of Insincerity an Fals-hood; in that you have given in a false Testimony against your Neighbour, or brought in a false Verdict against the innocent and oppressed; in that you have not, to the best of your knowledg, laid all things naked and open before my Deputy; but have, through the Cloud of your Impiety, darken'd his Understanding and his Knowledg; you have, as much as in you lay, endeavour'd to cheat and delude *the judge of all the Earth*; and have in effect in open Court boldly proclaim'd, *How doth God know, can he judg through the dark Cloud*, Job 22. 13. *Tush be seeth not, is there knowledg in the most High?* Which leads me to the Second thing considerable, *viz.* That as Judges personate God, so he is a constant Eye Witness of all their Proceedings. *Take heed what you do; for you judg not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgment.*

I am not ignorant that many Learned Commenta-tors have interpreted these words, *is with you in the judg-ment*, in a twofold Acception

First, That *he is with them* to take notice of and eye all their Proceedings.

Secondly, to assist them, or as the Prophet speaks, Isa. 28. 5, 6. *To be a Spirit of judgment to him that sit-teth in judgment.*

But I shall for Brevity sake, confine my self at this time to speak to these words only in the former Sense, that being most suitable to strike all that are concern'd

in

in this publick Solemnity, into an awful Reverence of that great *Judge of Heaven and Earth*, by reason of his immediate Presence in the midst of them.

“ It was wholsom Advice that one gave to his
 “ lewd Friend, That he should have the Picture of
 “ his grave and serious Father in the Room where he
 “ was wont to celebrate his Debauches; imagining
 “ that the severe Eye of the good old Man, tho but
 “ in Effigie, would give check to the wanton Sallies
 “ of the intemperate Youth. And to the same purpose *Seneca* advised *Lucilius*, to fix the Idea of
 some grave Person a *Cato* or a *Lælius* before him, Epist. 11.
 as a very convincing Method to restrain him from
 Vanity and Excess. To which I might add that of
Zeno, who being ask'd by his Friends *how they might keep themselves in a regular and due Order when he was gone*, he made this reply, *Si me presentem semper putetis; by imagining me to be always present as a beholder of your Actions.* But we who live under the Dispensation of the Gospel have no need of such Foreign Exhortations as these, *we have a more sure word of Prophecy*, which does direct us to level our Thoughts and fix our Apprehensions upon an Object infinitely surmounting those in prophane Story. We are taught that God is a constant Spectator of all our Actions; that we are in the Eye of our Friend, our Father, and our Judge; that *we can go no whether from his presence*, *Pl. 139.7, 8. but that all things are naked and open before that great God, with whom we have to do.* *Heb. 4. 12, 13.* And that *no man let his attempts be never so earnest, can hide himself or his Actions in secret places, that this Lord shall not see them.* *Jer. 23. 24.*

And indeed these Thoughts are so riveted in the mind of every Christian, that nothing but a dark Cloud of Impiety can obscure our belief of it. An upright Judg is fully convinced that God sees the intention of his Heart; and an uncorrupt Pleader is the very same. A faithful Witness knows that the Almighty is in the Court; and an impartial Jury does so too. In short, *The good man sets the Lord always before him*, Ps. 16. 8. and does really think that God stands by and sees all the Passages of his Life. And therefore I shall be so charitable as to believe that you all agree in the Assertion, and shall insist no longer upon the proof of it, least by so doing, I should seem to bring the Integrity of some of you into question. Proceed I therefore to draw only one practical Observation from this second Proposition, and so I shall conclude.

Doth God eye all your Proceedings, Then I pray you, consider to what purpose it is to varnish over a bad Cause with the Fucus of Oratory, or the Paint of specious Pretences? What signifies the being brib'd in the dark, or suborn'd in a corner? To what purpose is the smothering your Falshood from the eye of Men, *when it is seen and view'd by that great God, who knoweth all the hearts of the children of men*, 1 Kings 8. 39. and the secrets thereof, Ps. 44. 21.

It is an ingenious Comparison, (and very well suits this Case) which is put by a modern Writer.

Dr. Scott's Christian Life. part 1. ‘ Suppose (says he) that you beheld the Almighty, being sitting upon a Cloud in some visible Form, with a

' Thunder-Bolt in his Hand, and from thence looking
 ' down upon you, curiously observing how you de-
 ' mean your selves, and closely pursuing you with his
 ' awful Eye, through all your dark Retreats and Pri-
 ' vacies; would not the Thought of any Action that
 ' is displeasing to him be ready to strike you into
 ' Trembling and Horror; could you imagine your
 ' selves to be any where secure in your Wickedness,
 ' while you saw your selves uncovered to his Allsee-
 ' ing Eye, to which your Closets lie as open as your
 ' Halls, and your Hearts as the Highways? *To which*
he adds farther, ' If I were thoroughly assured that the
 ' King were listning behind the Curtain, and heard eve-
 ' ry Word that is spoken in the Room, I should doubt-
 ' less be as much afraid of talking Treason against him
 ' tho I saw him not, as if he stood just before me.
 And so if God be in your Court in an invisible man-
 ner, and you are not able to see him through that
 thick Curtain of Matter, which is drawn between
 you and his spiritual Essence; yet you may be well as-
 sured, that he is behind it, is listning to what you say,
 and prying into what you do; keeps intelligence with all
 your Thoughts, and is intimately acquainted with all
 your Pleadings, your Evidence and your Awards;
 and therefore you ought to be every jot as cautious of
 all your Proceedings, as if you saw him standing by
 you, to record every Thought, every Word, and e-
 very Action that there passes, and to enter into his
 Debt-Books every Item of your Guilt, against the great
 Day of Account.

Justice is every Mans Birth-right, and a Man can with no more Equity bereave me of it, than he can take away my Life, my Liberty or Estate; and therefore he that either doth so himself, or by false Witness, or the like, occasions others to do so, is not only unfaithful to his Trust, but is indeed a Felon and an Ul-surper; robbing me of that, to which I have not only a Claim by Nature, but by the Laws of the Realm too; and therefore must expect to have a very severe Sentence passed upon him, when he gives up his Accounts to that God, who was an Eye-witness of his Failures.

To conclude; I remember 'tis recorded of *Henry IV.* that so great was his Wisdom, so considerable his depth of Knowledg, that 'twas said, *that he that would corrupt his Council, must first begin with the King.* And blessed be God, we may as truly say that our Laws are so exactly contrived, our Courts so well filled with Men of Politie and profound Parts, that he that would *pervert Judgment* must begin with the Bench; for it is scarce possible to imagine, that Injustice can be so closely managed, either upon the account of Witness, Jury, or Advocate, as that a Cause shall suffer without the Knowledg of the Judge, who like *Solomon*, will in all probability find out the Fallacy, under the most close Disguise.

And therefore give me leave my *Lord* to add, that if you be not wanting to your self and to us, we may be assured, that *Justice will run down like a mighty Torrent, and that there will be no complaining in our Streets.*

Let

Let me take the Freedom therefore once more to remind you, that you must one day appear at the Bar of that great God whom you personate, and who is a Judge among Gods. Hear therefore the word of the Lord &c. Thus saith the Lord, execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor; do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, neither shed innocent blood in this place. Jer. 22. 1. &c. Ezek. 42. 27. but defend the poor and fatherless, do justice to the afflicted and needy, and rid them out of the hand of the wicked; and in all your Proceedings, both Judicial and Criminal, Take heed what you do, for ye judge not for man but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgment: wherefore let the fear of the Lord be upon you, take heed and do it, for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons nor taking of gifts.

